

were poor because their crops were too abundant; that artisans were idle because there were too many houses. Yet in the complicated scheme of the modern order this is exactly what happens. Steam, electricity and the invention of labor-saving machinery, have so vastly increased man's powers that every form of consumable wealth can be readily produced in almost unlimited quantities. Only a very small percentage of the people of any country are able to buy all the useful things they need. They can produce, but do not get a return for their product that enables them to complete the circle of production, exchange and consumption. Here is plainly the riddle to be solved. In what way can the intricate mechanism of production and distribution be so adjusted that the orderly flow of wealth may be continuous, and not, as now, intermittent?

Tell the Farmers the Truth

SENATOR MOSES says that the farmers have good reasons for discontent with the relatively low return for their labor, and capital invested in their farms. In no other American industry in the net profit so small as in agriculture. What can be done to improve conditions? There are the old, old suggestions for getting the farmer out of debt by lending him more money; for increased production through more scientific farm methods; for Government fixing of prices; for more anti-railroad legislation. They have the obvious defect that they lead to the same result; an ever-increasing surplus of farm crops for which no market can be found. Why not tell the truth about the farmers? Millions of them are poor and in debt because they have been robbed of a large share of the value of their products. They have been robbed by the high protective tariff. By excessively high interest rates. By unduly high freight rates. By unjust systems of local, county and state taxation. There is no mystery about the causes of agricultural depression. The remedy is not in the direction of more laws, commissions and regulation of industry, but in the repeal of the class legislation from which the farmers are suffering. The best thing that Governments can do for the farmer is to reduce the oppressive burden of taxation that is crushing him; and destroy land monopoly by establishing the Single Tax; and leave him alone to work out his own problems.

Why Taxes are Not Reduced

REPORTS received by the National Industrial Conference from the various states show that with the exception of a few Western States there has been no cutting down of annual budgets, and no decrease of tax burdens. New administrations pledged to economy and lower taxes were elected in many states, but were helpless against the urgent demands for larger appropriations. Everybody favors economy as a general proposition, but when it comes to their particular interests they join in ad-

vocating public activities that mean larger drains upon the taxpayers. New taxes on capital, trade and industry are levied, and found to have the inevitable result of increasing the already too-high cost of living. Thus the process of taking a large percentage of the annual wealth production for unproductive purposes has reached a stage that threatens industrial and commercial prosperity.

Taxes mean work. However levied and collected, they can only be paid in the products of labor. In so far as they diminish the purchasing power of the producers they directly decrease consumption and limit industry and trade. Taxes on capital—savings that should be used in the production of more wealth—limit its supply and result in higher interest rates. Taxes on industrial or transportation corporations are added to the cost of goods or the price paid for services. Taxes on buildings are added to the rents. Business taxes are shifted to the ultimate consumer. Juggling with tax laws does not alter the fact that as now imposed taxes are a burdensome draft upon the productive forces of the country.

What is the remedy? Nothing better can be expected from law-makers until an intelligent public sentiment has been created, that will demand fundamental changes in methods of taxation. The first step should be the substitution of direct taxes for present indirect taxing systems, so as to bring home to each citizen a realization of the meaning to him or her of the costs of municipal, state, and national governments. Until this is done there would seem to be little prospect of a substantial reduction in the burden of taxation.

"Pigeon Paley"

WHEN Paley wrote his "Moral Philosophy" in 1875 he earned for himself the nickname "Pigeon Paley" by a paragraph which his friend Law advised him to cut out saying it would exclude him from the chance of a bishopric. He retorted, "Bishop or no Bishop, it shall go in," and this is what went in:—

"If you should see a flock of pigeons in a field of corn, and if (instead of each picking where and what it liked, taking just as much as it wanted and no more) you should see 99 of them gathering all they got into a heap; reserving nothing for themselves but the chaff and refuse, keeping this heap for one, and that the weakest perhaps and worst pigeon of the flock; sitting around, and looking on all the winter whilst this one was devouring, throwing about and wasting it; and if a pigeon more hardy or hungry than the rest touched a grain of the hoard, all the others instantly flying upon it and tearing it to pieces; if you should see this you would see nothing more than what is every day practiced and established among men."

If poverty is appointed by the power which is above us all, then it is no crime; but if poverty is unnecessary, then it is a crime for which society is responsible, and for which society must suffer. —HENRY GEORGE.